

# Our Boys and Girls

## FAITHFUL LEO.

The sun beat down with hot rays upon the hay fields. It was making the once green grass into fragrant hay, which Grandpa White would stow away in his barn loft for old Brindle, Daisy and Dolly, the horse, to eat next winter.

Marjorie and Ralph had chosen the tallest haycock for their playhouse. They worked busily until they had hollowed out a cozy nook upon the shady side. Then they went back to the farmhouse for some playthings.

"I wish you to amuse the baby for a little while, Marjorie," said her mother. "I must finish the ironing this afternoon and sew some lace upon your new dress."

"All right, mamma," agreed Marjorie cheerily. "Ralph and I are playing house down in grandpa's hay field, and Beth shall be our baby."

"Do not play out in the hot sunshine," warned mother.

"Oh, our house is on the shady side of a big haystack," explained Marjorie.

"And the wild grape vine that climbs on the rail fence is near by and makes it seem cooler," added Ralph.

When they went back to their playhouse Marjorie carried Lillian, her prettiest doll, Ralph had a new book which his aunt had sent on his birthday, and Baby Beth hugged a plump Teddy bear. Grandpa's dog, Leo, trotted on behind.

"Poor doggy, it is too bad you can't take off your great coat," said Marjorie, as Leo threw himself down in the shade with his tongue lolling out. "Just see how he is panting, Ralph."

"I should think he would go swimming in the pond and get cooled," replied Ralph. "That's what I should do if I were a dog."

They played happily for a long time. Marjorie dressed her doll in its best silk gown, while Ralph read aloud from his story-book. Beth tumbled about in the hay, playing with Teddy. Leo stretched out lazily until he looked like a yellow fur rug, and took a nap.

By and by Marjorie said it was lunch time, and they ate the little frosted cakes which grandma had put into a paper bag for them.

It grew hotter as the breeze which had been cooling the hay fields stopped blowing. The sunshine did not seem as bright. Hazy clouds were gathering above the western hills.

Baby Beth cuddled her curly head upon one chubby arm and went sound asleep. Marjorie made her a little pillow of hay and laid Teddy beside her.

"Doesn't she look comfy and sweet!" she exclaimed.

Ralph looked up from his book. He had been away in a New York zoo, gazing at all sorts of wild animals.

"Oh, say, Marjorie!" he cried. "Gramp is going to get in a load of hay. See, Dennis has Dolly and the hay cart! Let's have a ride to the barn."

Marjorie hesitated. "Baby is sure to sleep for an hour and nothing will hurt her," she decided. "I'll race you across the field."

Away they flew, while Baby Ruth and Leo slept on.

It was great fun to tramp down the sweet-smelling hay as grandpa and the hired man tossed up great, heaping forkfuls.

Then all at once it grew dark and the wind began to blow. Grandpa trotted old Dolly, that he might get the hay into the barn before the rain came. Just as they reached the end of the lane, great raindrops splashed down and the thunder pealed loudly.

Suddenly Marjorie cried out, "Oh, Baby Beth!" In the excitement and fun she had forgotten her little sister under the haystack.

"Quick, mamma!" she called, running into the kitchen and catching her mother's hand. "Come with me and get Baby Beth. I'm afraid to go alone, because it's lightning."

Together they ran across the fields. Wild fears flashed through Marjorie's mind. Perhaps the hay might have fallen in and smothered baby! Suppose, just suppose, that she had waked up and wandered down to the pond and been drowned!

Under the haystack, safely sheltered from the storm, they found Baby Beth. Her face was rosy with slumber, but her eyes were big and frightened and tears were rolling down her cheeks. In front of her, on guard, his great body protecting her from harm, was Leo, his shaggy coat dripping with rain. He wagged his tail and whined with relief when he saw baby's mother coming.

"Naughty Leo, wouldn't let baby dit out!" sobbed Beth.

Mrs. White wrapped the baby in a shawl she had brought and hurried home. Poor, frightened Marjorie followed closely, bringing Teddy and Lillian, whose lovely silk gown was spoiled. Leo ran on ahead, barking joyously.

Her mother did not need to scold penitent Marjorie.

"Old dog Leo was betern' I was," she sobbed. "I never thought of the bad things that might happen to baby. I didn't even remember she was under the haystack till it began to thunder. I was just thinking about Marjorie White's good time, and I'm just as 'shamed as I can be. I'm glad Lillian's blue dress is spoiled. I'm glad I'm sopping wet. I ought to get cold and be sick a whole month, only I s'pose you'd have to take care of me."

Mother patted Leo's shaggy head, saying, "Faithful doggie!" Then she raised Marjorie's tear-stained face and gave her a forgiving kiss.

"Mamma is sure that the little girl will remember next time," she whispered gently.—  
Nellie M. Leonard, in Zion's Herald.

## FOUR FLAGS.

By Mary Davis.

Her real name was Roberta Rue Day, but she was such a lively, wide-awake little creature that people called her Robin Run Away for fun, but after a while they shortened it to Robin.

Robin loved outdoor life. Half of her playtime was spent in the slender top of the old pear tree, swaying back and forth as if she was a fairy. She liked to play with the boys, too. Robin would only make friends with people who were strong or pretty. She never walked to school with little lame Julia Pierce who lived next door, and if poor little Mabelle Lee, who had a dreadful scar on her face, came into the circle to play a game, Robin slipped quietly away.

One noon the children were playing in

Farnum's barn. It was a tumble down old place that was fast falling to ruin. By and by somebody heard a kitten crying in the loft.

"Too bad we can't reach it," said Joe Swift.

Robin stood still for a moment, looking around. Her black, gypsy-like eyes grew bright when she had solved the problem. She climbed up a pile of old lumber and crawled onto an old ladder that was suspended from the roof. Sybil Lowe screamed and even the boys scowled as she picked her way delicately over the rickety old thing. But Robin waved her hand gayly at them and hummed a little song as she disappeared in the loft. By and by she came back carrying a squirming little half-starved kitten. Her face was radiant with triumph. Still smiling she crossed the shaky old ladder and climbed easily down. Just as she struck the floor she gave a sharp little exclamation.

"What's the matter?" demanded Joe, while Sybil took the kitten tenderly in her arms.

"I stepped on a nail or something," she replied; "look, it went right through my shoe. But it really didn't hurt."

She held up her small red shoe and pointed to a dent in the sole and then promptly forgot all about it in the excitement of buying milk for the kitten.

An hour later she was reminded of it most unpleasantly. Her foot began to ache and swell and she was glad to have the school physician take her home in his car.

The next few days Robin suffered like a tortured little animal in a trap. She was too proud to cry. But she was angry as she had never been before. To think of a rusty little nail making her all this trouble and pain.

Then she heard a familiar tap, tap of Julia Pierce's crutch and her next-door neighbor came softly in.

"I brought you a flag," said Julia and Robin noticed for the first time what a pleasant, rippling voice she had.

It was a beautiful silk flag with gold fringe, and Julia tied it to the bedpost.

"I had to lie in bed for a year with a cast on my knee," she explained, "but mother pinned grandfather's flag where I could see it and I'd remember our brave soldiers and be patient, too."

She slipped away before Robin found an answer, but the little flag with the gold fringe remained. For the first time in her life Robin began to think about other people who had suffered, too. She had always scorned patient little Julia, hopping slowly along with her crutch. Now she thought that Julia was really brave.

"Hullo, Robin," began Joe Swift, wriggling all over like an abashed puppy who has wandered into the wrong room, "I brought you a flag. Hope you feel better."

"Thank you, Joe," smiled Robin, "tie it to the other corner, please."

Joe was awkward. He shook the bed so that Robin almost screamed, but she shut her lips firmly together. She was thinking of Joe's feelings rather than her own pain. Joe heard the noise of approaching footsteps and fled.

The nurse, who had met Joe hurrying away, looked vexed as she entered the room. Then she smiled, for Robin looked at her with the face of a brave girl enduring pain and not with those dreadful animal eyes.

Robin's mother came in at this moment. "Mabelle Lee sent you this flag, and she wanted me to tell you that she was taking care of your kitten."

"Please put it at the head of the bed," said Robin and she made herself smile. Then she